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ITALY IN ARMS

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ITALY IN ARMS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
CLINTON SCOLLARD



NEW YORK
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1915

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*Italia, you hold for me
The glamour of antiquity;
Beauty inviolate as the sea.*

*Yours are the meshes of a spell
Fragile and yet infrangible;
Subtle as music from a shell.*

*Around you hangs the aureole
Of art, and for my sense and soul
You are forevermore the goal!*



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ITALY IN ARMS

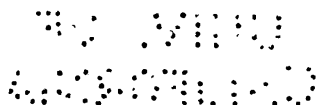
Of all my dreams by night and day,
One dream will evermore return,
The dream of Italy in May;
The sky a brimming azure urn
Where lights of amber brood and burn;
The doves about San Marco's square,
The swimming Campanile tower,
The giants, hammering out the hour,
The palaces, the bright lagoons,
The gondolas gliding here and there
Upon the tide that sways and swoons.

The domes of San Antonio,
Where Padua 'mid her mulberry trees
Reclines; Adige's crescent flow
Beneath Verona's balconies;
Rich Florence of the Medicis;
Siena's stairlike streets that climb
From hill to hill; Assisi well
Remembering the holy spell
Of rapt Saint Francis; with her crown
Of battlements, embossed by time,
Stern old Perugia looking down.

Then, mother of great empires. Rome,
City of the majestic past,
That o'er far leagues of alien foam
The shadow of her eagles cast,
Imperious still; impending, vast,
The Colosseum's curving line;
Pillar and arch and colonnade;
Saint Peter's consecrated shade,
And Hadrian's tomb where Tiber strays;
The ruins on the Palatine
With all their memories of dead days.

And Naples, with her sapphire arc
Of bay, her perfect sweep of shore;
Above her, like a demon stark,
The dark fire mountain evermore
Looming portentous, as of yore;
Fair Capri with her cliffs and caves;
Salerno drowsing 'mid her vines
And olives, and the shattered shrines
Of Pæstum where the gray ghosts tread,
And where the wilding rose still waves
As when by Greek girls garlanded.

But hark! What sound the ear dismays,
Mine Italy, mine Italy?
Thou that wert wrapt in peace, the haze
Of loveliness spread over thee!



Yet since the grapple needs must be,
I who have wandered in the night
With Dante, Petrarch's Laura known,
Seen Vallombrosa's groves breeze blown,
Met Angelo and Raphael,
Against iconoclastic might
In this grim hour must wish thee well!

BELLA GARDA

Over Riva La Rochetta rises with its craggy
crown,
On the quiet mountain village from its summit
sheer looks down,
Flings the sunlight, flings the moonlight, back
from climbing cliffs of brown.

At its base the olives silver, and the fleet barks
come and go,
With their sails of tawny saffron, with their
slanted sails of snow,
Straining in the winds of morning, drooping in
the even glow.

All along the blue lake's borders toss the red
buoys with the tide,
Ever shifting, ever changing through the luring
hues that hide
In the bosom of the sapphire, in the turquoise
glorified.

Oleanders in the gardens with the bland blush
roses vie,
And the palm trees throw their shadows, and
the lizards laze and lie
In the sun whose golden sceptre rules an arc of
stainless sky.

You may hear the boatmen calling, you may
hear the boatmen sing
Songs of love and songs of longing as the swallows wing and wing,
And the air that breathes about you is the air
of endless spring.

And that titan, Monte Baldo, with its heights of
shine and shade,
Looms beyond the fair lake's bosom, in its majesty arrayed,
Crests and bastions, sheer abysses, and the furrows God has made.

Bella Garda! Bella Garda! Set forevermore
apart
In that temple we call beauty, far beyond the
reach of art,
While I tread the world of mortals you will hold
in thrall my heart!

OUT OF ROME

Out of Rome they march as when
Scipio led his serried men,

While the cry of "Viva! Viva!"
Rings again and yet again.

They, in dreams of high desire,
Rousing them to holy ire,

On the Capitolian altars
Have beheld the vestal fire.

Rear and vanguard, first and last,
They have caught the virile, vast,

Emulous centurion ardor
From some legion of the past.

Win they laurel wreath or rue,

We must feel that this is true,

That the ancient Roman valor
Thrills through Italy anew!

A SERENADE

From the mountain's purple shade,
Down the path the moonbeams made,
Came the drifting boatmen singing
Such a tuneful serenade.

Yearning was the plaintive strain,
Tender was the low refrain,—
Napoli, oh, Napoli!
Love and longing blent with pain.

All the passion of their race
Burned on each transfigured face;
Napoli, oh, Napoli!
Ah, the well-belovèd place!

Then the music faded far
Till it seemed as though a star
(*Napoli, oh, Napoli!*)
Must be breathing each sweet bar.

Gone!—and yet some distant height
Caught the cry for lost delight,—
Napoli, oh, Napoli!—
Spanning the abyss of night.

And I heard it float in dreams
Down the tranquil slumber-streams
 (*Napoli, oh, Napoli!*)
Till the morning showed its beams.

Little training, less of art,
Just the homesick hunger-smart,—
 Napoli, oh, Napoli!—
Just the outcry of the heart!

DOLCE FAR NIENTE

The book unconned is cast aside,
The moment is not meet for prose;
I read a rhyme upon the tide
That just below me ebbs and flows.

The arching sky is sapphire-fair,
The breeze is like a low refrain;
There is a perfume in the air
Like opening roses after rain.

I mark, along the middle slopes,
The clustering groves of chestnuts climb,
Thick as a young girl's budding hopes
When life is at the pairing-time.

And, scaling height by terraced height,
Through jagged valleys reaching down,
I see the javelins of light
Shatter upon the cliffs of brown.

Or, gliding with the boats that pass,
In idle errantry I go
Toward Alpine mountain-peaks that mass
Their chill white pyramids of snow;

Or toward that golden south that lies
 'Twixt segments of the shining sea,
And beckons on with dusk-dark eyes
 Across the plains of Lombardy.

I know the ripe delight of life
 No cloud-encompassed clime can give;
Here all the radiance is rife
 That elsewhere seems so fugitive.

Then lengthen out, oh, afternoon,
 Nor wane and fade, oh, amber glow,
But keep the year forever June
 Above dream-fair Bellagio!

A VENETIAN SUNSET

On the bright bosom of the broad lagoon
 Rocked by the tide we lay,
And watched the fading of the afternoon.
 In golden calm away.

The water caught the fair faint hues of rose,
 Then flamed to ruby fire
That touched and lingered on the marble snows
 Of wall and dome and spire.

A graceful bark, with saffron sails outflung,
 Swept toward the ancient mart,
And poised a moment, like a bird, and hung
 Full in the sunset's heart.

A dull gun boomed, and, as the echo ceased,
 O'er the low dunes afar,
Lambent and large from out the darkened east,
 Leaped night's first star.

THERE IS A POOL ON GARDA

There is a pool on Garda,
 'Tis fashioned by the moon
That climbs above the mountain's crest
 What time the night birds croon;
The pool is paved with silver
 Inwrought with burnished gold,
And in its deeps a treasure sleeps
 The goblins stored of old.

There is a pool on Garda,
 It will elude you still
Ply you the oar from shore to shore
 With howe'er strong a will;
'Twill flee you like a phantom,
 'Twill lead you on and on;
A luring light, 'twill fade from sight
 What time the moon is gone.

There is a pool on Garda,
 You'll see it in your dreams;
'Tis shaped of silvery glamour,
 'Tis fused of golden beams.
Once you have caught the vision,
 The fair elusive ray,
'Twill haunt your brain like some sweet strain
 Forever and a day!

SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA

Saint Anthony, beneath those soaring domes
That in your memory pious hands upreared,
I heard to-day the music of the mass,
And saw the throng in adoration bow,—
The pleasure-loving folk of Padua.
The crimson glamour of the altar lights,
The mellow tinkle of the altar bells,
The lifting of the consecrated Host,
And the engirdling hush wherethrough the day,
From windows high-set in the mighty nave,
Sifted the softened glory of its gold,—
All blended in a perfect harmony.
Here, where in speaking marble your sweet deeds
Are told so marvellously, your bones repose,
Though noble actions need no monument.
About you Padua, rich with the great past,
Heaped with memorials of the days that were,
When out of Italy burst the flower of art,
Pulses and throbs; and yet in the tense press
Naught seems so vital, so full-filled with soul,
As you, deep-sepulchred although you are
Beneath the lift of your stupendous domes!
So evermore life triumphs over death.

ASHES FROM A CINERARY URN

(Campo Santo di Salo)

These flakes of ashes that are strewn to-day
About the crimson roses at our feet,
Once plucked the rose of life and found it
sweet,
Once dreamed the dream of life and found it
gay.
Then what more fitting tribute than to lay
Them round the rose which is the red pulse-
beat
Of sentient earth, a harmony complete
Expressed in bloom, re-bourgeoning alway!

So shall we see with every opening June,
When crescent hangs the moon at twilight's
close,
And pale moths flutter and the hill-winds swoon,
And down the garden path the glowworm
glows,
And every breath we breathe is as a boon,
A heart re-kindled with the kindling rose!

WIND OF THE DAWN

O golden wind of the dawn, with your savor of
the sea,
Your voice, like a cry in the night, lays hold of
the heart of me!
Sings—O the magic things!—sings of Italy!

O golden wind of the dawn, with your savor of
the sun,
Your voice, like the sighing of palms, to my
yearning heart has won!
Sings—O the magic things that I dream upon!

O golden wind of the dawn, from that olden,
golden shore,
May your voice to my heart cry on till the voy-
age of my life be o'er,
And then—and then—cry forevermore!

THE DANCE OF THE OLIVES

When at noontide up Lake Garda (Bella Garda)
 creeps the wind,
 Then each little silvery olive sets its nimble
 leaves to dance;
How they trip it and they skip it in a measure
 unconfined!
 Hands across in blithe abandon, they retreat
 and they advance.

Every bough on Mount Brione (oh, the branches
 that are there!)
 Every spray where haughty Trenno looks on
 Riva's fruited plain,
How they amble, how they gambol, how they
 part and how they pair,
 To the lipping and the crisping of the mur-
 murous refrain!

I shall see them clear in visions in a country
 far away,
 If I close my eyes at noontide—all their
 wavering expanse—
And should frolic breezes whisper I shall smile
 and I shall say:
 “Now the south wind creeps up Garda, and
 the olives are a-dance!”

A BAMBINO

In Siena, by the stately Duomo,
 (Variant black and white the marble pile!)
Where, 'mid pomp of popes, an "Ecce Homo"
 Looks adown one dim sequestrate aisle

I beheld a maid with her bambino,
 Round whose tiny head was aureoled
Such a radiant light as the Trentino
 Sees when morning tips its peaks with gold.

Ah, I thought, had I but Veronese's
 Touch, or flawless Rafaele's skill,
I might shape a faultless face whose praises
 On the winds around the earth would thrill!

Yet unto the sweet unconscious mother
 It would mean, by doting love beguiled,
(Mary Mother was but such another!)
 Just the ecstatic wonder of the child.

THE PONALE ROAD

(Fra Bartolomeo in Riva to Fra Anselmo in
Padua)

Do you remember the Ponale Road,
And how its coils along Rochetta's face
Above the blue of Garda's bosom rise?
Then how it winds, in serpentine ascent,
High through the mountain cleft beneath the
frown

Of overhanging crags and cliffs and peaks,
Until in long white loops it drops away
To where Lake Ledro like a jewel lies,
Its liquid sapphire girt with emerald?
I know you must recall, although the years
Seem mist-enshrouded since we twain were boys,
And in the upland meadows herded goats
Far above Trenno, and, when autumn's hand
Tinted the sweeping slopes with russet-gold,
Gathered the chestnuts in the rustling aisles.
Such buoyant days!

O'er Monte Baldo still
The sunrise beacons like the oriflamme
Of God, and still, beguiled by love, the moon
Silvers a path for lovers on the lake.

But the Ponale Road.—A week ago,
In the soft light of failing afternoon,

I wandered forth from Riva. Sarca's plain,
And Arco's ancient castellated crest,
Dozed in the sun, but La Rochetta flung
Wide on the lake its pyramid of shade.
As I strode up and on, the peasants passed,
Still faring market-ward with oil and wine,
Seeking the booths within the little square
'Neath Santa Maria. There was scarce a sound,
Save for the treble of a mountain stream
Amid the rocks, or some faint boatman's call
Borne from below by echo. I plucked a flower,
A tiny whorl that blushed as does the rose,
And bore it with me as I walked along,
Musing upon its beauty, and how God
Makes all the world his garden, if but man
Looks with observant eyes. And so I came
To where a promontory from the cliff
Beetles, and leaned upon the barrier wall
Guarding the curve of the Ponale Road.
And there I watched the ochre and saffron sails
Skimming toward Torbole, saw the olive boughs
On Mount Brione waver in the wind,
And purple shadows lengthen on the lake.
Rousing from revery, I was aware of one
Who stood beside me, swarthy, heavy-browed,
Threat looming from the caverns of his eyes,
Black Andrea of Molina, he who wed
Anita.—I have told you how I loved
And lost Anita, ere we pledged our vows

Jointly to heaven. I have heard it said
He was her death.

A cunning, crooked smile
Twisted his cruel lips; his hairy hands
Twitched like an ape's. "Now, by God's
wounds," he cried,
"You whose sleek face she never ceased to love
Shall go to meet her!" And with that we
clutched,
And strained against the wall and turned and
writhed,
Until he slipped and toppled and whirled down—
Down—down—his body bounding like a ball
From jutting crag to crag; then there were
bubbles,
And ripples—ripples—widening on the lake.

Friend of my youth, offer for me a prayer
Each day at matin-hour, and when the eve
Deepens the dusk about Il Santo's shrines,
And the tall tapers on the altars burn,
And with the incense holier grows the air,
Renew your supplication, lest my soul
Be plunged in the red pit!

MEMORIES OF COMO

Triumphant Autumn sweeps from shore to shore,
And works swift magic with her wand of fire;
She fills the hollows of the hills once more
With amethyst, and like a golden lyre
The lyric woodlands murmur and suspire.

I listen, and the clear harmonic sound
Quickens the radiant past within my brain;
My spirit crosses with an ardent bound
The severing ocean, and I float again
On Como's tranquil breast that bears no stain.

Now dreamily from vineyard-terraced heights
Are wafted low and artless vintage airs;
Blent odors lend their attar-sweet delights,
And by the lake's marge, on the water-stairs,
I see the dusk-eyed lovers stand in pairs.

I view Varenna's snowy-white cascade,
And bright Bellagio nestling 'neath its crown
Of laurel-woven, ilex-darkened shade;
I mark o'er Lenno, looking grandly down,
The pilgrim-haunted church of old renown.

Aye, and the mountains that uplift the soul
Above the gross and earthly, I behold;
And all the mighty shapes that mass and roll
Through evanescent cloudland uncontrolled,
And sunset skies miraculous with gold.

Dear to the heart are memories like these
Of beauties seen upon some vanished day,
That, like the carven figures of a frieze
In marble wrought, although the years decay,
From fair perfection do not fade away!

CYPRESSES

I

Against the sky how gloomily they stand,
Those dark and tapering trees that one may
see

By many a shrine in the Italian land,
Like mourners over frail mortality!

And when I muse on how their shadows fall,
I seem to hear the melancholy stave
Of those that tower by the Aurelian wall
Forever grieving over Shelley's grave!

II

Do you know the cypresses,
Group on group, and row on row,—
Know the stately, lonely trees
Down at San Vigilio?

They hold compact with the past,
All its strange deep ebb and flow,—
Silent, secret to the last
Down at San Vigilio.

Question—will they answer!—nay!
Plead—and will they heed you!—no!
You may hearken many a day
Down at San Vigilio.

Leave them, then, and let them stand
Cryptic, yea, forever so,
Guardians over lake and land
Down at San Vigilio!

TREMOSINE

Like an eagle Tremosine poises o'er Lake
Garda's tide,
Hangs upon the lofty cliff's edge with its
campanile tower;
Wears the morning like a rose-leaf, evening
like a poppy flower;
Shows a glowing star at midnight to the boat-
men for a guide.
Up your dizzy path I clamber for another
golden hour,
Tremosine, Tremosine, you the mountain's nest-
ling bride!

Up your dizzy path I clamber, but I clamber it
in dreams,
For the leaves of autumn deepen, and the
prescient north-wind blows,
And along the gusty skyline there's a cloudy
threat of snows;
While I hear the rush and roaring and the gush
of pouring streams,
Tremosine, Tremosine, I can see how you re-
pose,
Let me, then, again be with you just for one
more golden hour,

With the evening drooping o'er you like a
crimson poppy flower,
And the great blue lake before you and below
you wrapt in dreams!

AT PAESTUM

Across the sea from Sybaris they came,
Oaring their galleys with long sweep and slow,
The adventurous Greeks who gave the place a
name
More than two thousand shadowy years ago.

Here, sensing beauty in the insensate stone,
They wrought from out it, span on perfect
span,
Pillar and plinth, till, as the flower full blown,
Rose temples to the gods Olympian.

Despoiled their altars, ravaged are their
shrines;
The lizard and the snake alone glide by;
Yet the tall columns face the Apennines,
And still the old Greek grandeur typify.

In their Ionic majesty one finds
The truest tokens that the past can show,—
What aspirations kindled mortal minds
More than two thousand shadowy years ago!

AT TWILIGHT-TIDE UPON COMO'S
BREAST

At twilight-tide upon Como's breast,
A shape like a wondrous butterfly,
With wings wide spread, on the under-sky
Of the lake seemed to poise and rest.

And the marvel grew as I saw it lie
On the placid breast of the lake afloat;—
Was it really the dream of a boat,
Or the dream of a butterfly?

THE HOUSE OF DANTE

This is the house where Dante dwelt
In the old days at Padua,
And saw the golden morning melt
To noon, and eve grow crimson—ah,
How sad that time in Padua!

In the gray courtyard blooms the rose
Through the warm changes of the sun;
In all Italia's garden-close
No flower was fair to him save one,—
She whom he longed to look upon.

Below his window is the tomb
Of Antenor, of ancient race;
And you may picture in the gloom
The weary exile's sombre face
Brooding above that burial-place.

And you may picture how he trod
The long and dim arcades below,
In cheerless meditation shod,
The while the press went to and fro
To pray in San Antonio.

This is the house where Dante dwelt
In the old days at Padua,
And saw the golden morning melt
To noon, and eve grow crimson,—ah,
Sad hours, sad hours at Padua!

A SEA-GULL ON LAKE GARDA

Over Garda a gray gull flying
With glint of wing in the gold of dawn;
Over Garda a gray gull crying
Eerily as the eve drew on!

Far from shores where the great waves welter
When storm rides up to the trump of doom,
Why has it sought this lonely shelter
Where the beetling crests of the mountains
loom?

Here there is beauty above and under,
Sapphire water and sapphire sky,
Yet not the sea with its ancient wonder
Where all the winds of the world go by.

But haply 'tis only the rover longing,
The wander-lust that has brought it here,
The vagrant lure that goes thrilling, thronging,
Through my own heart at the sweet of the
year;

To be freed from paths that are broad and
beaten,
(Idro, Garda,—wherever you will!)
Where wilding attars the clear airs sweeten,
And gipsy music comes over the hill!

All of this from a gray gull flying
Over Garda at glint of dawn;
All of this from a gray gull crying
Over Garda as eve drew on!

LET THERE BE DREAMS TO-DAY

"Let there be dreams!" one said. I answered,
"yea,
Let there be dreams to-day,
Fair dreams that come and go
As silently as snow,
And one—this one—shall stay
Within my hearts for aye and aye!"

This one dear dream!—O bugler, call the dawn!
O trumpeter, sound summons to the night!
These twain are blended for my soul's delight,
And never shall be gone!
These twain o'er Garda with the sun and moon.
I have known many a boon,
But no such guerdon as this dream confers.
You who are beauty's faithful worshippers,
Listen, for rapture stirs
Within me at the conjuring of this dream!
Sun-gleam, moon-beam
On Garda that is loveliness supreme!
Gaze upon Garda's bosom! Gaze with awe!
For surely mortal vision never saw
So sapphirine a pool of under-sky!
Mark you where Garda's mountains lift on high,
And the bold eagles fly
I' the sun's fiery eye,
Here, if it be on earth, is majesty!

So let me dream my dream of dreams, and slake
My sense of beauty's thirst, most perfect lake!
And let the moon and sun
In wondrous antiphon
Repeat and yet repeat
Their tale, and make this miracle complete!
In this, my vista-dream, shall Riva still
Sit by its crescent harbor. From its hill
Shall Malcesine's ancient castle throw
Its bastioned shadow on the lake below,
And isolated San Vigilio
From the deep cincture of its cypress bower
Face evermore the radiant sunset hour,
Looking where Salò, amid verdant vines,
In its blue haven like a jewel shines.
Still shall Gordone, among spreading palms,
Take the eternal airs of spring for alms,
And Sirmione pine, with backward gaze,
For the renascence of old Roman days,
And sweet Catullus of the liquid phrase!

Even the veriest hind
May catch some marvel from the crooning wind
Haunting the heath and hearth at evenfall,
When twilight shapes its etchings on the wall.
Who was not born a dreamer in some wise,
Let him be pitied! Dull and dark his way.
But he who sees with wide or lidded eyes,
Waking or sleeping, some ethereal ray,

A happiness is his none may gainsay;
And so for me, in their all-golden guise,
Let there be dreams to-day!

IMPRESSIONS

I

In Riva-town the morning came
Like a great saffron rose of flame;
Each peak was as a pharos-fire;
The valleys murmured like a lyre.

The inverted chalice of the sky
Burned brilliant lapis-lazuli,
And under the resplendent day
The lake, a liquid sapphire, lay.

II

In Riva-town the noon was white
As lilies blanching in the light,
Save where the shade lay long and cool
Like slumberous water in a pool.

The air was heavy with the scent
Of rose and jasmine attar blent,
While the shy, swift chameleon
Ran through all colors in the sun.

III

In Riva-town the evening fell
To soft cæsuras of a bell,
While up the heaven's blue lagoon
Sailed that gold galleon, the moon.

The shallop stars swam in its wake,
Reduplicated in the lake,
Till naught but dreams went up and down
About the streets of Riva-town.

THE BASTION

From the slopes a beetling bastion beckoned
Reared by sturdy hands when Venice's name
'Mong the powers of earth to none was second,
Such the zenith glory of her fame.

"Surely," said I, "I am bid to clamber;
I must grasp my pilgrim staff and fare!"
So I chose a morn when azure-amber
Were the cloudless heights of upper air;

So I left behind the paven highways
Where calm Riva broods away the hours,
Winding upward through the narrow byways
'Twixt the purple-clustered vineyard-bowers.

Like great stairs the terraces ascended;
One by one I set my foot to climb;
From the olive trees, the while I wended,
The cicada tossed its strident rhyme.

Little greetings cheered me from the grasses;
Children flung me, as I strode along,
From above (the dusk-eyed lads and lasses)
Their sweet alms of soft Italian song.

So at last I scaled the path to wonder,—
Wonder of a sapphire lake that lay
Like a flawless jewel resting under
The wide arch of the expanding day;

Wonder of a plain that swept and billowed
Like lost edens of dear dreams gone by,
Of vast mountain summits that seemed pillowed
On the bosom of the leaning sky.

As I looked from my exalted station,
(Now had burst mid-morn in radiant glow)
On me flooded the full revelation
Why the bastion beckoned from below.

Here was beauty, here transcendant glory,
Here was majesty and here was awe,
Ever changing, yet not transitory,
Such as Moses on the mountain saw!

A SAILOR

A silvery wind in the olives,
And a blue wind on the sea,
And the cliffs and the coves of Capri
Call to me.

To the maids in the ripening vineyards
A hand-wave and a hail;
Run up on the *Santa Maria*
A saffron sail!

All the maids of Castellamare,
Howe'er so fair they be,
What are they when one maid in Capri
Calls to me!

GABRIEL

From one of Titian's canvasses there shines
The glory of an angel,—Gabriel;
How strange the contradiction, for they tell
That he who there is limned with faultless lines
Had, while he dwelt within the earth's confines,
A face of heaven, but a heart of hell!

AT THE VATICAN

(August, 1914)

Where the Italian skies
Arch with their azure span,
Silent of lip he lies
There in the Vatican.
What of his high estate?
That does not make him great!
Prelates and popes and kings,
They are but petty things
Unless in the mortal urn
The fires immortal burn;
Sympathy, charity, faith,
The simpler, larger trust;
Love that mounts like a wraith
Over the grosser dust!
Place and pomp and power,
They are of little worth;
Creeds abide for an hour;
Deeds, they sweeten the earth!
Not for the robes he wore,
Not for his churchly ties,
But that his fair life bore
All that is good in man,
Do we honor him who lies
There in the Vatican!

A SAINT

Here is the cloister-cell wherein he bruised
His shrunken body that his eyes might see;
Here is the cloister-walk wherein he mused
On immortality.

And here the cloister-garden where for hours
He toiled, intent upon his soul's repose,
Where still his sweet and saintly spirit flowers
In one perennial rose.

SO WE CAME TO MALCESINE

So we came to Malcesine, and our slim barque
furled its sail
Underneath the castle ramparts, and we heard
a nightingale,
Hidden in an ilex coppice, lift the burden of its
tale.

And the mountains seemed to listen, looming
height on looming height,
And our yearning hearts responded to the cry of
love's delight,
As we came to Malcesine at the drooping of the
night.

PRIMAVERA

Primavera! primavera!

Thus the golden thrushes call
In cool sallies down the valleys
Where the Umbrian fountains fall.
Ah, the rapture that they capture,—
Wanderers by slope and shore!

Primavera! primavera!

Spring is in the south once more.

Primavera! primavera!

Roses by the Roman wall
Yield the guerdon of the burden
Of an attar magical.
Life's deep measure brimmed with pleasure
Offers nothing to deplore;

Primavera! primavera!

Spring is in the south once more.

Primavera! primavera!

'Tis the heart refrain of all,
Lord or lowly, base or holy,
Where Calabrian peaks are tall.
Lads and lasses down the passes
Lilt love's olden lyric lore;

Primavera! primavera!

Spring is in the south once more.

THE DANCING FAUN

They took him from the shrouding earth
Anigh a Roman villa old;
What sylvan silence gave him birth
No wreathèd sibyl ever told.
Yet he was surely forest born,
And roamed the woodland wild and wide,
Dancing to nimble pipes at morn
And in the hush of eventide.

How fair he was these snowy lines
In their unmarred perfection show,
Flitting athwart the dusk of pines
Those far forgotten years ago.
Mayhap an envious god in wrath,
Seeing him foot the alleys dim,
Beguiled him down some tangled path,
And put this marble spell on him.

Perchance (who knows?) he there was found
Within the bosom of the glade,
With requiem songbirds singing round,
And sighing reeds that sadly swayed;
Perchance in wonderment they bore
To Rome his icy image down,
And placed him in a square before
The marvelling imperial town.

And since no sculptor dared to say
His art had shaped a form so fine,
An auction strange was held one day
Beneath the stately Palatine.
Then he whose wont had been to rove
At will the winy woodland air
Was set within a well-trimmed grove
To make a villa garden fair.

This lonely lot he long endured
Till Rome was ravaged of her crown,
And Vandal hands, by beauty lured,
In mad exultance dragged him down.
Then it was his, alas, to know
Of under-earth the blinding pain,
Till fate, that aimed a toiler's blow,
Bestowed the golden sky again!

Sole remnant he of all the race
That once held endless holiday
In bosky and in bowery place
When airs were fragrant with the May.
Ah, who can say what visions still
Of bondless hours his chill veins warm!
Fair dusk and dawn dreams yet may thrill
The seeming coldness of his form.

We ask in vain. As mute he stands
As when the curse was on him laid,
And 'neath the god's remorseless hands
His gladness ceased within the glade.
Was his a crime that seems so pure?
"Nay! nay!" his lip, though silent, saith;
Then why, forsooth, must he endure
Forevermore this marble death?

A LOVER OF LUCREZIA

I mind me how that she would come,
When all the hyacinth dusk was dumb,
Down sunken cypress-mazes; then

The sudden nightingales would sing
Their loves again and yet again

With their perfervid passioning,
With their ecstatic burden,—ah,
Lucrezia! Lucrezia!

I mind me how the kiss of her
Was sweet, then bitter as is myrrh;
How all her Hybla words were fraught
With subtleties, and how delight
Died ere the dream divine was caught,
Died, and was whelmed and drowned in night,
Drowned in death's black abysses,—ah,
Lucrezia! Lucrezia!

I mind me how her gleaming eyes
Gloated above mine agonies;
And how her slow, suave smile became
A serpent look intolerable;
And though I burn in endless flame,
I shall await her down in hell
With itching hands to clutch her,—ah,
Lucrezia! Lucrezia!

BENVENUTO

I once knew Benvenuto. He and I
Both wrought in bronze. He was a seemly
fellow,
Skillful as Angelo, deft as Donatello,
Yet scorning fame, and letting time slip by
In dreams, as Arno doth when eve is nigh;
Often a poet, and then—Punchinello.
Over a flask of *Lacrima Christi*, mellow;
Laughterful, loveable, open as the sky.

One night when we were wandering in the
Ghetto,
We met a ruffian whom they called *Il Bruto*
Who beat a cringing stripling of a boy.
I saw my friend was fingering his stiletto,
Then, in a flash, he thrust the shining toy
'Twixt the man's ribs. There you have
Benvenuto!

POPPEA

Then spake Poppea wantonly, and said,
She that was doomed and dead
Dim centuries since, "bring thou to me"
(This was in dreams)
"Some subtle lectuary
Meet for abandonment!"
And I uprose and went,
Being a slave within that pillared place
Where golden streams
In basins wrought of traced chalcedony
Bubbled and sparkled with alluring grace.
I came to one
Who as a statue seemed, wrought out of night,
Awful to look upon.
He handed me a chalice of the dye
Of lapis-lazuli.
"Take it," he cried, "herein is all delight!"
I took and bore it, and Poppea quaffed,
The while she laughed.
"This is love's dearest philter," then quoth she
Triumphantly,
As, with swift-ebbing breath,
She reached out arms to Death.

A ROMAN TWILIGHT

The purple tints of twilight over Rome;
Against the sunset great Saint Peter's dome,
And through the gateways peasants wending
home.

Shadows that gather round the Aventine;
And just above the dim horizon line
The star of Hesper, like a light divine.

A perfume faint as of forgotten sweets,
As though there came, far-borne through lonely
streets,
The breath of violets from the grave of Keats!

A CRIPPLE

You note yon cripple by the Duomo door,
With his bent body, like an olive bough
Warped by the winter wind!

He has a soul
Straight as a cypress sapling on a hill
Limned in an arrowy line against the morn!

A MOUNTEBANK

Mark you that mountebank who hugs his fiddle
As though the instrument were an Amati?
He hails from the bleak heights above Frascati,
And is, they tell me, something of a riddle.

Were a dumb thing abused, he'd act the hero,
Incensed, with hand and foot the offender
spurning;
But if it chanced, we'll say, that Rome were
burning,
He'd sit and play his fiddle as did Nero.

ENIGMA

'Twas a chance meeting in a gallery ;
He seemed all charm and blithe urbanity.
He spoke of Titian and of Angelo,
Of Guido and of Fra Angelico,
Of Botticelli, and his features shone
With such a look as young Endymion,
Straying the meads of Latmos, might have had.
But when I mentioned Borgia, the blood-mad
Insatiate Ezzelino, and the grim
And cruel Malatesta, over him
A change as swift as sudden lightning came,
And then was gone. I never knew his name.
He seemed all charm and blithe urbanity,
And yet I often wonder—

CHIMES AT PADUA

Dim falls the violet twilight hour,
The evening air grows cool, and, ah,
How sweet from San Andrea's tower
The chimes float over Padua!

The dusk descends, the white stars flower
Above the red-tiled roofs, and, ah,
How fair from San Andrea's tower
The chimes drift over Padua!

And while night lessens hour by hour
Till blooms the golden morning, ah,
How soft from San Andrea's tower
The chimes waft over Padua!

LIONETTO

LIONETTO

(*A Hospital in Venice, A. D. 1400. LIONETTO
and a PRIEST. LIONETTO speaks.*)

I am called Lionetto, and I dwell
Upon a narrow street that blindly ends
Behind San Giacometto. Speak my name
On the Rialto, in the stately square
Through which all Venice passes in to pray
Beneath the portals where the bronze steeds
stand,
And you will learn of me. My gondola
Was once the fleetest on the water-ways;
My hand was deftest with the long lithe oar.
But that is past.

“Haste!” said you?

With mine eyes

I seemed to read that word upon your lips,
That word and others, so that now I know
My little lamp of life will soon die out,
And darkness close about me. Note you not
How speech eludes my hearing? Mine own
voice

Sounds faint, like far off murmur of the waves
At night upon the Lido. Nearer!—stoop!
I would not have you miss one syllable,
Lest missing one, your absolution fail!

How happily together she and I
Lived with our winsome boy, a roguish lad
Whose added summers not yet numbered four!
That was before her cruel father came,
He who at Pavia had tarried long
As the Visconti's servile underling.
In that glad time the days with laggard feet
Dragged ever by, till I could get me home,
And feel my fair boy's arms about my neck,
And with a greeting fond give back her smile.
Oft in the quiet of the summer eves
Below the marble of some palace stair,
While I touched lightly the guitar's sweet
strings,
Would she uplift the rapture of her voice,
And spell the night with passionate melodies.
And oft have lovely ladies overleaned
From balconies silk-screened, soft-praising her;
And oft have nobles from the wide-thrown doors
Tossed out a shining disc of orient gold,
And bid her buy some bauble. That was ere
Her cruel father came to bide with us.

After the mocking profile of his face
First cast upon our wall its evil shade,
She never was the same. Night following night
I met her waning welcome, but, dull fool,
Deemed some slight ailment vexed her, till one
eve,

As slow and silent I passed up the stair,
I heard her father pour within her ear
The subtle philter of a lying tale;—
How I feigned love—was false—spent idle days
With some light paramour, for then it chanced
The sun of fortune shone not down on me,
And I brought little home for hungry mouths.
Then anger leaped from leash, for when the
hound,

Sensing my fury, whimpered cringingly
That he but heard these things low-noised about,
Did not believe them, was but asking her
Could she believe them, I cast back the lie
Into his leering face, and bade him go,
And darken ne'er again a door of mine.
So crept he out, not answering me a word.

And she? What said she? Naught. She made
no sign

While I was speaking, and when I had done
Only looked at me with her large calm eyes
In mute reproach that was more hard to bear
Than all her father's calumnies. The thought
That ire had made me not quite just to him,
That haply some malicious knave had sown
This festering seed within the old man's brain
Brought sharp regret to harrow me.

“Forgive,
Forgive me, sweet!” remorsefully I cried;

"I'll win him back, and crave his pardon here."
With that I went, and sought him near and far
In the low haunts I knew he frequented,
But found him not.

"He will return," I said,
Communing with myself, "the morrow morn.
Aye, even now he may have come to beg
My patience with him!"

Thus I, homeward-bent,
Dreamed blindly of forgiveness mutual.

Meanwhiles the night shut in, a grim, dank
night,
And all the myrmidons of darkness drew
Their folds about the city. Grisly fear
Darted from ambush, clutching at my heart;
When I beheld from the accustomed pane
No loving taper fling its welcoming light.
Onward I stumbled, as a spent man fares
At dusk-fall up some riven mountain slope
Unguided by the beckoning of a star,
And lo,—chill emptiness! The only voice
That answer gave to my beseeching cries
Was mocking echo.

O those pitiless hours,
Those anguished hours until the midnight
stormed
The windless silence from an unseen tower!
What awful doubts in grim procession stalked

Throughout my mind, slaying each new-born
hope!

What dismal fancies rose and grew and grasped
My strained imagination, till my brain
Reeled to the verge of madness!

Would she come?—

I prayed. I cried in frenzy unto God,
Upbraided him. I cursed. Then midnight
struck.

My sleep was phantom-peopled. Down dim
aisles,

Endless, and set with somber cypress shades,
I wandered amid sad and sheeted forms,
Forever seeking one I failed to find.

I wakened suddenly. A sullen morn
Peered through the casement, and I heard a
voice,

His voice, her father's voice. Upright I sprang,
Athrill with joy, but when I saw his face
I felt joy sicken to a pale despair,
Then die, and quickly nascent in its stead
Reared those dire twins, black rage and red
revenge.

Yet had I curbed these furies had his tongue
Not spat forth venom. How the demon laughed,
Flung his foul boastings in my very face
That he had lured her from me. To what end
This most unnatural deed had been wrought out

He gave not forth, nor yet divulged he why
Toward me he harbored hatred. Did he deem
Me dull and dotard that he tarried thus
And trifled with my heart-strings?

He had learned

All craft, all crime, all hideous wickedness
From the Visconti while at Pavia;
Yet when I gave that furious tiger-spring,
My hot hands itching for his flabby throat,
Of what availed his wiles?

I strangled him,

And cast him from me as one would a rat.
And then— What said you? Trial? Murder?
nay!

Venice has deep lagoons that tell no tales,
And who was there to miss him?

She?

Just God,

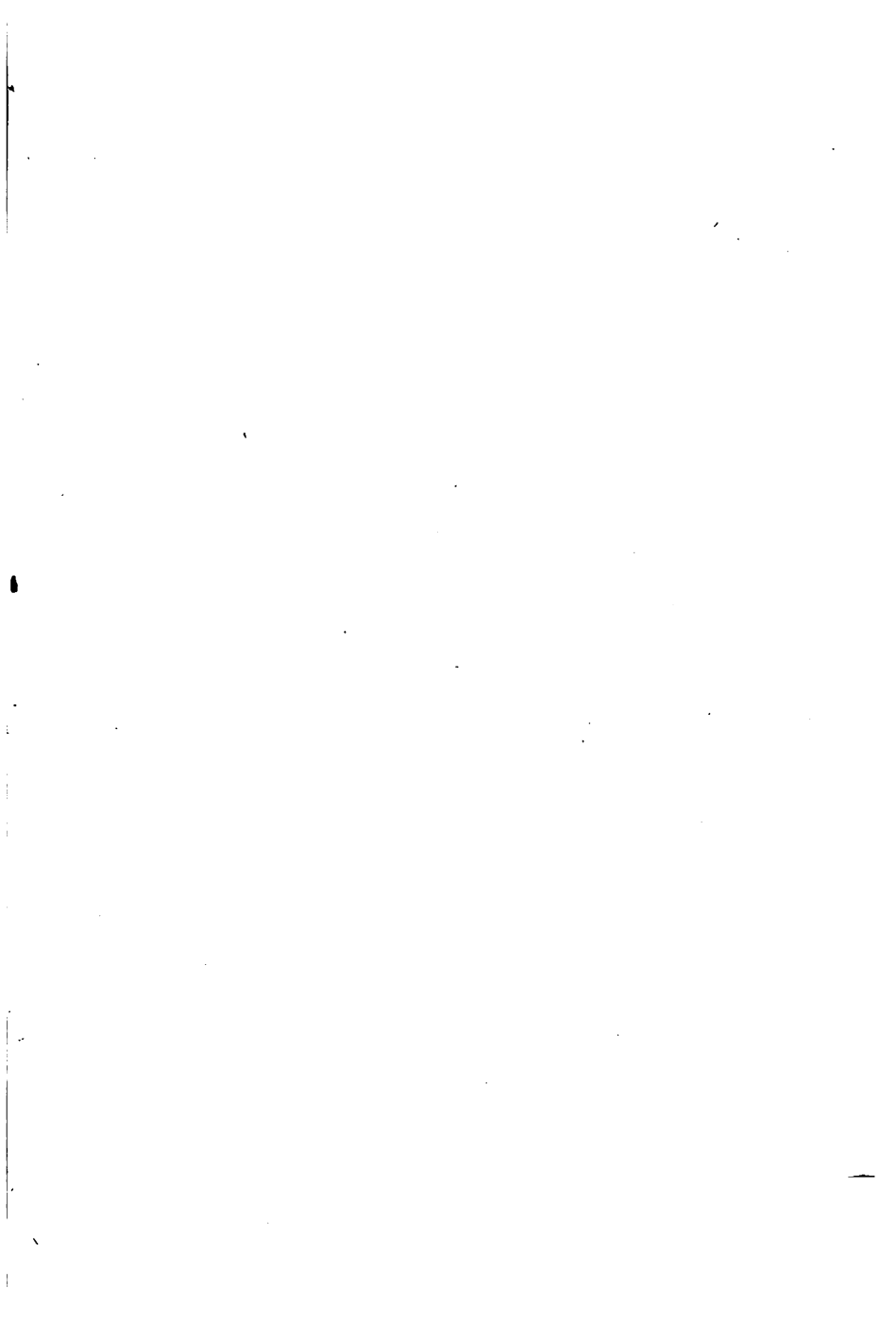
Was this thine ever-sure, stern meting-out
Of punishment, that where the long sea-wall
Across the tides looks in the eyes of dawn,
The cruel water should give up its dead?
They found her there, and in her arms our boy,
Our fair-haired boy.

How very cold it grows!

The doctors say this woeful hurt of mine
Is slow in healing. Night has come so soon.—
Dear Christ, have pity on my soul!

(The PRIEST)

Amen!



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